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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/519,550	12/28/2004	Takashi Manako	Q85348	2736
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2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.				
SUITE 800				
WASHINGTON, DC 20037				
EXAMINER				
MERCADO, JULIAN A				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1795				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
12/10/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/519,550

Applicant(s)

MANAKO ET AL.

Examiner

JULIAN MERCADO

Art Unit

1795

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 8-28-08.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 2, 4, 6-12, 14, 16-24, 26 and 28-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 2, 4, 6-12, 14, 16-24, 26 and 28-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Remarks

This Office action is responsive to applicant's amendment filed on August 28, 2008.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-12, 14, 16-24, 26 and 28-32 are pending.

Claim Objections

The objection to claims, 2, 12, 4, 14 and 26 has been withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The rejection of claim 6, 16 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph has been withdrawn.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-12, 14, 16-24, 26 and 28-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The term "strong electrolyte" in claims 1, 11 and 21 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "strong" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Applicant's arguments filed with the present amendment have been fully considered, however they are not found persuasive. The argument that the claimed strong electrolyte completely or almost completely ionizes or dissociates in a solution would only be persuasive if the claims recited a dissociation constant or other appropriate quantitative measure to give breadth and scope to the term "strong".

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 14, 16-20, 22-24, 26 and 28-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and 103

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 20-24, 26 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Prakash et al. (U.S. Pat. 6,444,343 B1).

Claims 7-9, 17-19 and 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Prakash et al. (U.S. Pat. 6,444,343 B1).

The rejection is maintained for the reasons of record. The examiner notes the amendment to claim 1 now reciting the features of claim 3 (now canceled) and claim 5 (now canceled) in the alternative. The relevant feature now claimed is a compound which is either an organic compound different from the liquid organic fuel or the compound is a strong electrolyte. Prakash et al. teaches an amine compound which is an organic compound different from the liquid organic methanol fuel.

Applicant's arguments filed with the present have been fully considered, however they are not found persuasive. The argument that this compound is used in combination with an electrolyte is not persuasive, since there is no language in the claims that preclude any electrolyte present. At best, that an electrolyte is not present in the claims is only a mere possibility, e.g. "if the unit cells are connected in series it is possible, for example, when the total voltage exceeds 1V, that electrolysis of water is generated" and "[u]nder such circumstances, an electrolyte is not used...." (applicant's remarks on page 11, citing the specification on page 12 lines 25-33). To this end, applicant's arguments are not found persuasive as the claims recite a *single* fuel cell and are wholly silent on a plurality of unit fuel cells connected in series, having the disclosed total voltage, having the self-generation of water and/or precluding any need or presence of electrolyte.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Julian Mercado whose telephone number is (571) 272-1289. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick J. Ryan, can be reached on (571) 272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

Application/Control Number: 10/519,550
Art Unit: 1795

Page 6

/Julian Mercado/
Examiner, Art Unit 1795

/PATRICK RYAN/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1795